

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION USBERLIN
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BONN 03429

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, BQG.
SUBJECT: FURTHER PRESS COMMENT ON NATIONALSTIFTUNG

REFS: (A) BONN 3384
(B) BONN 3092
(C) BONN 3093

1. SUMMARY AND COMMENT: THE SUBSTANCE OF THE PROPOSAL FOR A NATIONALSTIFTUNG HAS BECOME OBSCURED BY THE POLITICAL QUESTIONS ARISING FROM THE PROPOSAL THAT IT BE LOCATED IN BERLIN. TO PROVIDE MORE PERSPECTIVE ON THE SUBSTANCE, WE SUBMIT BELOW AN INFORMAL EMBASSY TRANSLATION OF AN ARTICLE WHICH APPEARED IN THE GENERAL ANZEIGER OF FEBRUARY 23 AND WHICH WAS WRITTEN BY WOLF J. BELL. THE ARTICLE SUGGESTS THAT THE NATIONALSTIFTUNG CAN STILL PLAY ITS APPOINTED ROLE OF PROMOTING GERMAN CULTURE AND THE ARTS, THAT BERLIN CAN MAKE AN IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION, AND THAT THE ORGANIZATION IS UNFIT FOR A
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POLITICAL DEMONSTRATION IN BERLIN AND SHOULD BE LOCATED IN BONN. WE COMMEND THE ARTICLE TO ADDRESSEES' ATTENTION NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF WHAT APPEARS TO US TO BE ITS COMMON-SENSE APPROACH BUT ALSO BECAUSE ITS AUTHOR IS THE SAME JOURNALIST WHO WROTE THE FIRST REPORT ON RECENT BONN GROUP DISCUSSIONS OF THE NATIONALSTIFTUNG QUESTION (REF B). THE LATTER FACT LENDS CREDENCE TO THE SUGGES-

TION (REF C) THAT THOSE WHO LEAKED THE REPORT ON THE BONN GROUP DISCUSSION MAY BE SYMPATHETIC TO THE ALLIED CONCERNS ABOUT THE PROPOSED "SOLUTION" TO THE NATIONAL-STIFTUNG QUESTION. END SUMMARY AND COMMENT.
BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

2. THE TEXT OF THE ARTICLE IS AS FOLLOWS:

GERMAN NATIONAL FOUNDATION RAN INTO DEAD END
A GOOD IDEA WAS TALKED TO DEATH POLITICALLY
THE FEDERAL LAENDER COULD NOT OVERCOME THEIR PAROCHIAL INTERESTS

FIVE YEARS AGO, ON JANUARY 18, 1973, CHANCELLOR WILLY BRANDT ANNOUNCED THE PLAN IN THE BUNDESTAG OF CREATING A GERMAN NATIONAL FOUNDATION. THIS PLAN MIGHT HAVE BEEN REALIZED HAD THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FROM THE BEGINNING APPROACHED THIS PROJECT WITH CLEAR IDEAS AS TO ITS CONTENT AND OBJECTIVES. BUT THIS WAS NOT THE CASE, AND THE MOST DIVERGENT INTERESTS USURPED THIS WELL-SOUNDING, THOUGH RATHER MEANINGLESS NAME. BRANDT'S SUGGESTION BECAME AN EXAMPLE OF HOW A WELL-MEANT IDEA CAN BE TALKED TO DEATH POLITICALLY. HE SPOKE ABOUT "SOME DREAMS" WHICH THE GERMAN NATIONAL FOUNDATION MIGHT BE ABLE TO FULFILL. IT HAS BECOME A TRAUMA SINCE, AND TODAY, FIVE YEARS AFTER IT WAS FIRST ANNOUNCED IN PUBLIC, ITS REALIZATION APPEARS MORE DOUBTFUL THAN EVER BEFORE.
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EVEN ITS NAME WAS AN UNFORTUNATE CHOICE, FOR THE DESIGNATION "NATIONAL FOUNDATION" IMMEDIATELY PRODUCED ASSOCIATIONS WITH BERLIN. IN THEIR PATRIOTIC PATHOS, CERTAIN REACTIONS APPEARED POLITICALLY OUTMODED AND HARDLY RENDERED A SERVICE TO THE FORMER CAPITAL. FOR IT IS APPARENT TO EVERYONE THAT, WITH THE LARGE NUMBER OF ARTIFICIAL PROJECTS THAT WERE CONTINUALLY RECOMMENDED TO IT, THE CITY IN THE END ONLY BECAME STILL DEPPER ENTANGLED IN ITS INSULAR EXISTENCE. TIES BETWEEN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC AND BERLIN, WHICH PLAY SUCH AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE QUADRIPARTITE AGREEMENT, WERE FREQUENTLY SEEN AS ONE-WAY STREETS ONLY. BUT THEIR DEVELOPMENT IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION WITH THE GOAL OF INSURING BERLIN'S LIVELY PRESENCE IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC IS OF NO LESSER IMPORTANCE TO THE VIABILITY OF THE CITY.

THE IDEA TO CREATE A NATIONAL FOUNDATION COULD HAVE SERVED AS A GOOD STARTING POINT IN THIS DIRECTION. BUT THE CHANCELLERIES OF THE LAENDER, BERLIN'S GOVERN-

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ING MAYOR SCHUETZ AND THE BUNDESTAG OPPOSITION AT THE
SAME TIME MOVED THE LOCATION PROBLEM INTO THE FORE-
GROUND. CDU CHAIRMAN KOHL WANTED TO MAKE THE ESTABLISH-
MENT IN BERLIN OF THE FOUNDATION'S OFFICE, WHICH WOULD
HAVE HAD A MAXIMUM OF TWENTY EMPLOYEES, A PRECONDITION
FOR INTER-PARTY COOPERATION IN INNER-GERMAN POLITICS.
IT WOULD CERTAINLY HAVE BEEN MORE ADVANTAGEOUS FIRST TO
CLARIFY THE PROBLEMS OF ITS TASKS AND SPONSORSHIP.
THEY ARE JUST AS CONTROVERSIAL TODAY AS THEY WERE FIVE
YEARS AGO. AND EVEN CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT'S COMPROMISE
SUGGESTION TO MAKE FEDERAL PRESIDENT SCHEEL CHAIRMAN OF
THE FOUNDATION DID NOT CHANGE THIS PICTURE.

BE THAT AS IT MAY, AS EARLY AS THREE YEARS AGO
THE FEDERATION FOR THE FIRST TIME APPROPRIATED IN THE
FEDERAL BUDGET THE AMOUNT OF 12.5 MILLION MARKS AS ITS
FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION (THE LAENDER WERE TO RAISE THE
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SAME AMOUNT). IT HAS GROWN TO 37.5 MILLION MARKS SINCE:
A SUM WHICH NOT ONLY CALLS FOR AN EARLY DECISION BUT
ALSO PROVOKES GREEDINESS. AT AN EARLY TIME THE INTEN-
TION OF THE FEDERATION TO TRANSFER TO THE NATIONAL
FOUNDATION THE TASK OF INSURING A MORE PRONOUNCED
GOVERNMENTAL REPRESENTATION IN THE CULTURAL SPHERE HAD
MET WITH THE OPPOSITION OF THE ARTISTS, WHO WOULD HAVE
PREFERRED THE PROJECT TO BE MORE OF A GENERAL PROMOTION
FACILITY FOR ARTISTS. IT WAS, HOWEVER, THE FOREMOST
INTENTION OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT GRADUALLY TO UP-
GRADE, WITH THE HELP OF THE NATIONAL FOUNDATION, ITS
FEDERAL CAPITAL OF BONN NOT ONLY TO A POLITICAL BUT
ALSO TO AN INTELLECTUAL AND CULTURAL CENTER.

THE PROPER ACCENT IS OF DECISIVE IMPORTANCE IN THIS
CONNECTION. EVEN THOUGH THE DESIGNATION 'GERMAN NA-
TIONAL FOUNDATION' APPEARS A BIT WORN BY NOW, IT IS NOT
TOO LATE TO CORRECT THIS MISTAKE. IT IS NOT THE NAME
THAT MATTERS. IF THE PLAN TO CREATE IN BONN (AS FOR
INSTANCE IN CONNECTION WITH THE LONG-PLANNED HALL OF
ARTS) A PLATFORM FOR THE INTELLECTUAL AND CULTURAL SELF-
REPRESENTATION OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC AT HOME AND
ABROAD WERE AT LAST FRANKLY MOVED INTO THE FOREGROUND,
IT WOULD BE QUITE POSSIBLE TO REALIZE THE OTHER GOALS
AS WELL, THAT IS, TO HELP BERLIN AND TO GIVE NEW
IMPETUS TO CONTEMPORARY ART BY STATE PATRONAGE. BERLIN,
TOO, WOULD HAVE A MOST PLAINLY VISIBLE POSSIBILITY IN
BONN TO REPRESENT ITSELF IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC WITH
ITS RICH CULTURAL TREASURES, AND BOTH CITIES WOULD PRO-
FIT FROM THIS. THE LARGE COLLECTIONS OF THE LAENDER
IN THEIR HISTORICAL AND FOLKLORIC DIVERSITY COULD BE
EXHIBITED IN A REPRESENTATIVE FASHION, MUCH BETTER THAN
IN THE CLOSE QUARTERS OF THE LAENDER MISSIONS IN BONN.
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AS A PERMANENT MISSION, A DOCUMENTATION OF GERMAN POST-
WAR ART COULD PROVIDE FRUITFUL STIMULI TO THE ARTS. A
FORUM OF MEETING BETWEEN POLITICS AND THE ARTS COULD
DEVELOP.

A CLOSE COOPERATION WITH CORRESPONDING INSTITUTIONS OF
THE LAENDER AND BERLIN, ESPECIALLY WITH THE PRUSSIAN
ART TREASURES FOUNDATION, WOULD BE POSSIBLE. ALSO
BECAUSE OF JUSTIFIED ALLIED RESERVATIONS THERE IS,
HOWEVER, NO FUTURE IN THE PROPOSAL SIMPLY TO REPLACE
THE NATIONAL FOUNDATION BY THE PRUSSIAN ART TREASURER
FOUNDATION. BUT THE LATTER COULD TAKE OVER ESSENTIAL
PARTIAL TASKS--QUITE IN LINE WITH CLOSE TIES BETWEEN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 BONN 03429

BONN AND BERLIN--WITHOUT POLITICAL TROUBLES AND WITHOUT
ENCUMBERING EAST-WEST RELATIONS. IT WOULD BE QUITE EASY
TO FIT INTO THIS FRAMEWORK THE PROMOTION OF CONTEMPORARY
ART DESIRED BY THE ARTISTS. EVEN IF THE LAENDER SHOULD
STILL FIND IT DIFFICULT IN THIS MATTER TO OVERCOME THEIR
RESERVATIONS, THE FEDERATION SHOULD ACT NOW.

NO ONE CAN DISPUTE THE POLITICAL LEGITIMATION OF THE
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO CONVEY TO THE GERMAN AND INTER-
NATIONAL PUBLIC AN OVER-ALL PRESENTATION OF THE FEDERAL
REPUBLIC. ONCE THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PROCEEDS ON THIS
ROAD, THE LAENDER AND BERLIN WILL MORE QUICKLY GRASP
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SUCH ACTION. FOR BONN IS THEIR
CAPITAL, TOO. IT WOULD, OF COURSE, BE NECESSARY TO RE-
EXAMINE IN THE LIGHT OF THIS COMPREHENSIVE MISSION
BONN'S RATHER MODEST PROJECT OF A "HALL OF ARTS."

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THIS PROJECT IS UTTERLY UNFIT FOR A POLITICAL DEMONSTRATION IN BERLIN. ON THE CONTRARY: SUCH A DEMONSTRATION WOULD ONLY BE ANOTHER OBSTACLE ON THE ROAD TOWARD A FURTHER NORMALIZATION OF THE SITUATION OF BERLIN AND OF OUR RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION AND THE GDR. BERLIN'S FUTURE IS NOT THAT OF AN OUTPOST CITADEL. BERLIN'S FUTURE CAN ONLY BE SAFEGUARDED IN CLOSE CONNECTION WITH THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC AND, EVEN THEN, ONLY IF EFFORTS ARE SUCCESSFUL TO MAKE THE CITY A CENTER OF RECONCILIATION BETWEEN EAST AND WEST. WHATEVER SERVES THIS GOAL, HELPS THE CITY; WHATEVER IMPEDES ITS REALIZATION, HARMS IT.
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